

EXHIBIT 24

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Safeguard Your Overall Health in the COVID-19 Pandemic

Coronavirus disease, (COVID-19), is a major stressor as Alabama experiences a true state of emergency and one whose end is not yet in sight. No one was fully prepared for the current outbreak which has infected more than 1 million people in our country alone. Everyone's routines have been changed and many are facing significant financial and other pressures like never before. This time of social distancing finds people may be more vulnerable to emotional and physical illness.

While fear and anxiety about this deadly virus can be overwhelming, experience shows there are ways to cope. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests the following:

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body.
 - Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.
 - Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
 - Exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep.
 - Avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Taking care of yourself should also involve making proactive steps to safeguard your physical health. Now that Alabama's stay at home orders have been modified, there are many positive actions that you can take for better health. Preventive care for conditions such as hypertension should not be overlooked. Medical appointments can be kept and elective surgeries that had to be postponed can be rescheduled. Healthcare providers are acutely aware of the risks posed by COVID-19 and know to strictly adhere to infection control measures to protect everyone's health and safety. Telehealth remains an option for many specialties while you try to stay at home.

Prenatal care is vital as Alabama continues to face an urgent maternal and infant health crisis along with the pandemic. While it is not known whether pregnant women have a greater chance of becoming sick with COVID-19, at this time it appears pregnant women seem to have risks equal to other adults who are not pregnant. Be sure to contact your health care provider to receive recommendations on getting the care you need while preventing the spread of disease, perhaps through telemedicine.

Alabama pediatricians and public health providers recently cautioned that we must maintain high rates of childhood vaccination by adhering to a schedule of vaccinations at recommended intervals. As an example of the need, measles is highly contagious and can be a serious illness in all age groups, especially in preschoolers and adults. One of four people with measles will be hospitalized; a few will get encephalitis and may die. This is especially tragic since measles is largely preventable (more than 97 percent) with vaccination.

Our department's vision continues to be healthy people, healthy communities, healthy Alabama. Everyone needs to take precautions to prevent COVID-19, but there is no need to panic. We expect recommendations and treatments for this deadly virus will continue to advance. More is being learned each day, so I hope you stay motivated to gain knowledge and continue to consistently follow the practices that will prevent the spread of the disease in your home, community, and state.

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State Health Officer

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